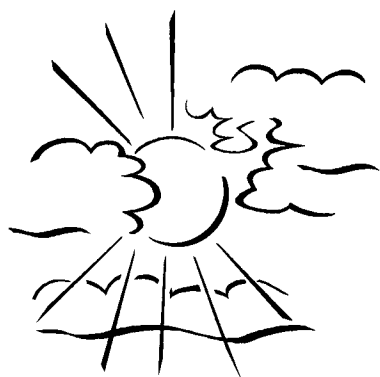


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of  
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Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Tuesday, August 2, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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# **Annual Kids Count survey shows Michigan needs to do better**

**July 31, 2005**  
**Livonia Observer**

On Wednesday, the annual Kids Count Report was released.

Michigan ranked 25th overall among the 50 states on 10 key measures of child well-being, showing a mix of improvement and decline between 2000 and 2003.

The annual national report is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore, Md. In Michigan the survey also receives support from the Skillman Foundation, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation and the Michigan Association of United Ways. The survey for 2005 is based on data from 2003.

The press release on the national survey concludes that child well-being is no longer improving in the "rapid and sustained way" that it did through the prosperous 1990s. "Among the negative trends: the number of children who live with parents facing persistent unemployment grew by 4 million, an increase of more than 1 million since 2000," the release says.

The report focuses on 10 "key" measures of child well-being: percent of low-birthweight babies; infant mortality rate; child death rate; teen death rate; teen birth rate; high school dropout rate; percent of "idle" teens; rate of children living with parents without secure year-round jobs; children living in poverty; and children living in single-parent households.

In Michigan, roughly 100,000 of the state's children under 18 are living in a household where no adult works. One in six Michigan children live in families with incomes below the poverty level (\$18,660 for a family for two adults and two children in 2003).

"Some of the parents are plagued with depression, substance abuse, domestic violence and a history of incarceration - significant barriers to getting and keeping a job," said Janet Zehnder-Merrell, senior research associate at the Michigan League for Human Resources. "Yet we continue to cut state resources that support the programs to address these issues in spite of the fact that the number of children in such families has swelled by one-half since the beginning of the decade."

State attempts to deal with its financial problems by cutting people from Medicaid is also beginning to show its effects. Michigan's lowest ranking is 38th among the 50 states in infant mortality. Eight of every 1,000 infants died before their first birthday in 2002. Similarly, Michigan ranks only 27th on infant birth weight.

The rankings show that the states doing the best on child well-being are primarily in New England and across the northern plains. New Hampshire, Vermont and Minnesota rank highest. States that rank lowest are in the South and Southwest with Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi ranking lowest. Virginia is the notable exception, ranking 13th overall.

Michigan ranks low for its overall size and for its position as a once progressive state among the other northern-tier states.

Reports like this are always open to a variety of interpretations. One interpretation suggests that a decline in government support for social programs has had a detrimental effect on children, especially the youngest and most vulnerable. Another interpretation might suggest that there is a decline in personal/parental responsibility that places children at risk from their own parents. An essay accompanying the survey examines the impact of substance abuse, domestic violence, prior incarceration and persistent unemployment on child well-being.

Of course, both positions are right. The addicted, abusive parents were predominantly once abused, neglected, poor children.

Some might look at the Kids Count survey for Michigan and say, well that's an acceptable level given our current economic situation. Maybe, when and if the state's economy improves and more revenue comes in without raising taxes, we'll address some of these problems.

Meanwhile, another generation of children will continue the cycle.

It's a question of state priorities and a question of how we meet the social needs we have.

Michigan can and should do better.

Hugh Gallagher is the managing editor of the Observer Newspapers. He can be reached by phone at (734) 953-2149, by e-mail at [hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net) and by fax at (734) 591-7279.

Michigan Report

August 1, 2005

## **CHILD SUPPORT AMNESTY TO BEGIN IN FALL**

Parents who owe past due child support will have a 90-day window to avoid penalties under a new law scheduled for effect October 1.

Beginning on that date, anyone who owes past due support can submit a Child Support Amnesty Request Form to his or her local Friend of the Court office. This must be accompanied by at least half of the payment owed, and any remaining support must be paid by the end of the amnesty period on December 31.

Participants will have no criminal or civil penalties enforced during the program, and penalties already assessed will be waived with the exception of felony prosecutions underway or if the payer has already been arrested on failure to pay past due child support.

The law was introduced to allow good-faith payers to fulfill their obligations and keep financially strapped payers out of jail, said Rep. Alexander Lipsey (D-Kalamazoo). The amnesty program does not affect current support obligations and income-withholding orders will remain in effect during and after the program. For more information or to obtain a request form, visit [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs) or call 1-866-540-0008.

## **DHS Touts 'Lipsey' Child Support Amnesty Program**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) (formerly the FIA) issued a news release announcing that beginning Oct. 1 people who owe past due child support will have a 90-day window to avoid state criminal and civil enforcement penalties under a new law providing for a time-limited child support arrearage amnesty.

*MIRS* readers might note that Rep. Alexander **LIPSEY** (D-Kalamazoo), a possible Democratic Attorney General candidate, is quoted in the Department news release. The release described Lipsey as the person who "initiated and guided the law through the state legislature."

The news release states that as of Oct. 1, anyone who owes past due support can submit a completed "Child Support Amnesty Request Form" to his or her local Friend of the Court office. The request must be accompanied by at least half of the past due support owed. Any remaining past-due child support must be paid by the end of the amnesty period on Dec. 31.

Participants will have no state criminal or civil enforcement penalties initiated for the duration of the program. Penalties that have already been initiated will be waived with the exception of felony prosecution that has been initiated or if the payer has already been arrested based on a criminal or bench warrant related to the payer's failure or refusal to pay past due child support.

The amnesty program was established by Public Act 564 of 2004 and sponsored by Lipsey to coincide with child support month in October.

"This program facilitates the basic purpose of the child support system - providing financial support to children," said Lipsey. "Through it, good faith payers can fulfill their obligation; children will receive much needed funds, and we will not waste jail space on cash strapped payers."

The amnesty program does not affect current support obligations. Income withholding orders for collection of current support will remain in effect during and after the amnesty program.

# A FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH: Boosting infant survival rates starts with moms

## Detroit program assists hundreds of women

*August 2, 2005*

BY ELIZABETH SUH  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

When Elizabeth Brown was pregnant with her first child at 13, she didn't know enough to visit the doctor until well into her second trimester.

She said she wasn't even sure she was pregnant and was scared to tell her mom.

With her fifth child, Mark, who was born June 10, she makes regular doctor's visits, reviews booklets from the health department on each month of her child's development and gets routine visits from a social worker who guides her on issues like raising a baby, lowering one of her daughter's blood-lead levels and watching for signs of asthma in her infant.

The 23-year-old is among hundreds of mothers participating in the Healthy Start program in Detroit. The program was established in 1992 to address the city's infant mortality rate -- which in 2003, the latest data available, showed that about 16 of every 1,000 live babies born died before their first birthday, compared to about nine of every 1,000 babies in the state.

Now, advocates are worried that efforts to expand programs like Healthy Start throughout Michigan are in jeopardy as the state Legislature looks to cut \$500,000 to \$1 million in funding first appropriated this year for infant mortality prevention.

"Any gains that we've seen will be compromised by these cuts," T.J. Bucholz, a spokesman for the Michigan Department of Community Health, said in late June.

In a study released that month by the Kids Count in Michigan project, researchers found some encouraging changes related to infant health between 1994 and 1996 and 2001 and 2003, the time periods studied.

In southeastern Michigan, rates dropped for teenage pregnancies and smoking during pregnancy. But the region saw increases in rates for the top predictor of infant mortality -- babies born prematurely and at low birth weight -- and some increases in the number of women who are skipping prenatal care or getting it late.

Statewide, African Americans were at highest risk for those three factors.

"That should raise red flags," said Pat Sorenson, vice president for policy at Michigan's Children, a Lansing advocacy group that helped produce the Kids Count in Michigan report.

Income and access to health insurance and care contribute to health disparities, which cost the state more in the long run than prevention, Sorenson said.

State Rep. Bruce Caswell, R-Hillsdale, chairman of the House appropriations subcommittee on community health, said legislators have tried their best to continue to address infant mortality.

**Voice your opinion**  
Contact your representative or senator by calling the state operator at 517-373-1837 from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

"The choice up here many times is between good programs and better programs," Caswell said in June. "So when a program is eliminated, I try my hardest to make sure those particular points of emphasis of that program are being addressed in other areas."

Caswell pointed to the House's proposed increase in Medicaid reimbursements for obstetricians to promote prenatal visits.

Rita Gibson, the social worker for the Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion who visits Brown and other moms through Healthy Start, said she wishes legislators would come see the work infant mortality funding pays for every day.

Brown found out about Healthy Start through the health department and joined while she was pregnant with her fourth child, Aaliyah, who is almost 3.

In one hour at Brown's house last week, Gibson followed up on 4-year-old Aset's recent visit to the emergency room after she accidentally ate some prescription pills in the house.

She suggested keeping medication out of the children's reach and not referring to medicine as candy.

She also checked up on Brown's postpartum doctor's visits, gave her a brochure on poison control and offered tips on dealing with heat in the house, which lacks air-conditioning.

"Some days, it actually gets hard to the point where I say I need a break," Brown said about raising her children as a single mother.

But she said Healthy Start workers keep her on track.

"When you're trying to accomplish things, they back you up," she said.

*Contact ELIZABETH SUH at 248-351-3298 or [suh@freepress.com](mailto:suh@freepress.com).*

Aug 2, 4:18 AM EDT

## **Study: 24 percent of uninsured Michigan children untreated**

By LINDA A. JOHNSON  
Associated Press Writer

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) -- Federal data show one-third of the roughly 8.4 million U.S. children without insurance go without medical care for an entire year, even though many are eligible for government health programs.

In Michigan, 24 percent of those from birth through age 17 who were uninsured - an estimated 30,625 children - did not receive any care, according to a study released Tuesday. It said 12.3 percent of insured Michigan children did not get care.

Uninsured children in Southwestern states and in Hispanic and black families were most likely to go without medical care, said the report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation of Plainsboro, N.J.

The foundation is releasing the report as it starts its sixth annual back-to-school campaign, called "Covering Kids & Families," to get more children enrolled in public programs such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP.

Nationwide, 32.9 percent of uninsured children went without any care - not even treatment in a hospital emergency department - for an entire year during the period of 2002 through 2003. That included 41.4 percent of Hispanic children, 29 percent of black children and 25.7 percent of white children.

Even when these uninsured children needed care for an illness or a vaccination for school, 15 percent of black children, 6 percent of Hispanic children and 4 percent of white children went without medical help.

"These are obviously working families. A lot of times both parents work, they may have two jobs, so they think their children are not eligible," Elaine Arkin, manager of the "Covering Kids & Families" campaign, told The Associated Press.

Yet more than seven of every 10 uninsured children would be eligible for free or low-cost health coverage under Medicaid or SCHIP, according to the foundation, which has set up a hot line at 1-877-KIDS-NOW to help parents.

The SCHIP programs vary slightly among the states in services offered and eligibility limits, but in general a family of four with an income up to \$38,000 a year should qualify. Programs normally cover checkups, eye and hearing tests, vaccinations and care when sick, including prescriptions and hospitalization.

The two government programs have helped reduce the number of uninsured children by about 2 million since 1998, with the biggest gains among Hispanic and African-American children.

However, about 8.45 million of America's 73.45 million children remain uninsured, including 2.9 million uninsured Hispanic and 1.6 million uninsured black children.

The nationwide percentage of uninsured children fell from 13 percent in 1998 to 10 percent in 2003. In Michigan, an average of 6.4 percent of children were uninsured in 2002-2003, the study said.



The foundation's report, prepared by analysts at the nonpartisan Urban Institute and the University of Minnesota's State Health Access Data Assistance Center, is based on recent surveys by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Census Bureau. It shows big differences among states in how many uninsured children went without care for a year, ranging from 14.8 percent in Maryland up to 47.1 percent in Arizona.

On Tuesday, the foundation was kicking off thousands of health fairs and other activities in every state and the District of Columbia to give parents information about how to enroll their children in the government health programs.

The foundation also has partnerships with major national corporations and is working with nearly 200 national public health, education, social service and faith-based groups to spread information about the government health programs through product ads, Web sites and mailings.

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On the Net:

Covering Kids & Families: <http://www.coveringkidsandfamilies.org>

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# **Health costs up; fewer insured - 07/31/2005**

## **About one in 10 Monroe County residents has no health insurance, according to new Census figures.**

[ctslat@monroenews.com](mailto:ctslat@monroenews.com)

By CHARLES SLAT

Mercy Memorial Hospital System says the number of patients who owe it money or simply can't pay for care is soaring.

"What we've seen in the last year is both an increase in the bad debt expense and the charity care, which tells us that people can't pay," said Daniel Wakeman, MMHS president and chief executive officer.

The hospital had to write off more than \$5.5 million last year and expects that number to climb to a record \$6.1 million this year, about 6 percent of its annual revenue.

The reasons are readily apparent, officials say. Rising health care costs are part of it. Unhealthy lifestyles are a factor. The economy still is sickly. Some patients overuse the system. And health insurance is getting costlier.

The Census Bureau last week issued some stark statistics about health insurance. In its first estimates ever, the Census figures show that nearly one in 10 Monroe County residents has no health insurance and about 7.1 percent of Monroe County youngsters younger than 18 have no health coverage.

It means nearly 14,000 people in the county don't have health insurance, including about 2,700 children.

"That just about hits what the American Hospital Association and Michigan Hospital Association have been guesstimating for years," Mr. Wakeman said.

The numbers leave the county in the bottom half of eight southeast Michigan counties in terms of the proportion of residents uninsured.

Large employers continue to wrestle with rising health insurance costs. Many firms are passing along costs to employees with higher co-pays, deductibles or premium contributions. A Michigan Manufacturers Association survey two years ago found that 41 percent of firms were laying off workers or reducing hiring to cope with annual health insurance increases.

Mr. Wakeman said one of the methods being used by automakers and the United Auto Workers to combat rising health insurance costs is to accept plans that increase co-pays or deductibles. "In many cases, what that does is just increase our bad-debt line," he said.

In the past year, the hospital has made a concerted effort to convince needy patients to fill out forms that will qualify them for charity care.

Under its charity care policy, the hospital forgives the bill for people whose incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. For a single-person household that means an income of \$19,404. For a four-person family, it runs up to \$38,710. "At 200 percent or below we forgive the bill completely," Mr. Wake-man said. "From 200 to 400 percent, we have a sliding scale."

"The trick is to get the individuals to fill out the form," he said. "A lot of people would qualify for charity care if they just fill out the darn form." He said pride and other factors play a role in that.

Nonetheless, charity care now is costing the hospital about \$30,000 to \$35,000 a month and it's been rising about 1 percent a year for the last two years.

But some people make a conscious decision not to have health insurance, although they can afford it.

Many young people don't get health insurance they have no dependents and are willing to bet they won't get ill or injured.

"They might actually make enough money to buy health insurance but purposely don't do it because they know they'll get care if they show up at the emergency room," Mr. Wakeman said. He said maybe a third of the uninsured fall into that category.

But affordability is a problem for most others. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) said its costs rose about 11.5 percent in 2004, continuing a trend of double-digit increases going back to 2001. It analyzed the reasons for the increases and found that new technology costs - including guidelines, procedures or new drugs - accounted for about 4.7 percent of that increase. Other contributing factors were fee increases, disease frequency and the aging of the insured population.

The only offsetting factors were changes in co-pays and deductibles, which tended to keep insurance costs from rising 1.3 percent more.

The insurer predicts co-pays and deductibles will continue to rise.

Mr. Wakeman acknowledges that hospitals are partly at fault for increases in health costs.

"I think part of the answer is to continue to try to cut the waste out of the total system," he said.

"We still have a lot of inappropriate care and unnecessary care going on. If we were to cut some of the waste out of the system, we'd have more resources to concentrate on those who can't afford care."

Lifestyles also contribute to the problem because people who live unhealthy lives usually will need more health care. Even those chronically ill sometimes don't change their lifestyles, such as asthma sufferers who continue to smoke even while taking costly prescriptions to ease their breathing.

Mr. Wakeman also advocates more government control of insurance rates in Michigan. He said state-regulated utilities write off millions in bills run up by needy people and the state allows them to pass along those losses to other customers who can pay.

BSBSM, which has nearly 80 percent of the insurance business in Michigan, can choose not to take any responsibility for persons who can't pay medical costs, he said, and that's reflected in insurer profits.

"The economy sucks, autos are getting killed, health care is getting the snot knocked out of it, but health insurers have had the most profits they've had in years," Mr. Wakeman said.

He said he believes BCBSM has begun to recognize that it needs to address bad debt and charity care at hospitals. "I think they've recognized they have to do it, but the methodology hasn't been developed."

"As long as you have a not-for-profit hospital system in the State of Michigan - which we have - somehow, someway those parts of the economy that are making money have to be responsible for taking care of those who aren't making money," he said.

# **Blue Cross unit to have long-term care plans**

## **Policies to cover assisted living**

*August 2, 2005*

BY ALEJANDRO BODIPO-MEMBA  
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan will start a new company that will offer long-term care insurance policies beginning in July 2006.

The company, which doesn't have a name yet, would be a subsidiary of Blue Cross Blue Shield and would concentrate on providing long-term care services to individuals. Blue Cross Blue Shield, Michigan's largest insurer, has never offered long-term care policies before.

Financial terms of the company weren't disclosed Monday.

However, Blue Cross officials said the new company would require a premium be paid, which would cover some or all of the costs for long-term healthcare needs of a customer. The individual policies would include coverage for assisted living and nursing care. The company also said there will be no group coverage products available.

Unlike traditional medical insurance coverage, long-term care coverage helps patients address chronic illnesses and disabilities that employer policies and Medicare don't cover. They usually include meals and help with daily activities such as bathing and getting dressed.

The average cost of nursing home care is more than \$50,000 a year, according to the AARP.

Medicare supplemental insurance is a federal program that assists older and some disabled people in paying their medical costs.

U.S. Census data suggest that the population of people 65 and older will double to more than 70 million by 2030. In Michigan, the figure is expected to double by 2020. Meanwhile, the average growth in the number of long-term care policies has been 18% a year.

"With the changes in population, you need products that will create a private sector solution for the people of Michigan as well as nationally," said Ken Dallafior, who was named president and chief executive officer of the new company. "That's why we plan on taking our ideas to the marketplace."

The new company expects to have about 12 employees the first year. In three to five years, the company hopes to have 50-70 workers. In addition, Blue Cross Blue Shield expects to expand its long-term care

business to other states.

Currently, there are about 100 insurance companies, including 24 so-called Blue Plans, across the nation that sell long-term health insurance products. Several of them operate in Michigan.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, which provides health care benefits to 4.7 million members, will be the sole investor in the newly formed company.

Other companies such as MetLife offer a variety of products geared toward older Americans seeking long-term insurance.

"What you will see, traditionally, is that there have been several companies that offer such products," said Mohit Ghose, a spokesman for America's Health Insurance Plans, a Washington, D.C.-based healthcare association representing 1,300 member insurance companies. "I think more choice for consumers is always a good thing."

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# **New facilities will make it easier to help inmates**

Monday, August 01, 2005

By Jeff Patton,  
Chuck Spence

The Kalamazoo Gazette

Kalamazoo County residents will have the opportunity to vote on two millages Tuesday. The first millage is to build a humane and appropriately sized jail and juvenile facility. The second millage is to fund a program that addresses the underlying contributive factors that influence crime in our county. Some of these contributive factors include poverty, joblessness, homelessness, and illiteracy. Unfortunately, many people incarcerated in our jail and juvenile home suffer from substance use and addictive disorders, and 7 percent have a serious and persistent mental illness. Most of the people with mental illness in our county jail have a co-occurring substance use and addictive disorder.

Racial minorities account for nearly 53 percent of the inmate population in our jail, which is an overrepresentation when compared to their numbers in the overall population of Kalamazoo County.

Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services formed a strong partnership with the Kalamazoo County Criminal Justice System to provide mental health and substance abuse services within both the jail and juvenile home. We also work with public safety officers to divert people with mental illness and substance-use disorders, when appropriate, from the criminal justice system to community-based treatment and rehabilitation alternatives. Many more rehabilitation and support services are needed to adequately address the serious underlying problems of people incarcerated in our jail and juvenile home, and in the community upon their release. No single agency can do this. Only our community can solve the contributing factors that often lead to criminal offenses.

The question is whether we have the will to do so. Our county jail and juvenile facilities need to be replaced with more modern buildings to assure not only the health and safety for inmates, but also for the staff who work in these places.

We are aware that some people claim that if the county increases the size of the jail and juvenile home, more people will be incarcerated, particularly minorities who are now overrepresented in our jail population. Others believe that this would result in the reduction or elimination of rehabilitation and diversion services. We firmly believe that more effective mental health and substance-abuse services can be delivered in the newly proposed facility. It will also permit us to more effectively work with inmates, criminal justice personnel, and families of inmates to develop release and aftercare plans for the offender's re-entry into our community.

On Tuesday, we urge you to take this opportunity to support the construction of a new jail and juvenile facility and additional funds for treatment and rehabilitative services.

Jeff Patton is executive director of Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Chuck Spence is director of the Regional Coordinating Agency for Substance Abuse Services and Bob Butkiewicz is jail clinician and diversion coordinator.

# of juvenile-home inmates

Monday, August 01, 2005

By James E. Walker

I bet that then-Kalamazoo County Commissioner Don Gilmer had no idea that 30-odd years later he would again be shilling for yet another law-enforcement tax increase when he argued for the initial jail millage.

Since the juvenile detention facility is purely a local option, and based on the Kalamazoo Gazette articles, it's in terrible shape, why should we continue to fund it? Why not tell the state that Kalamazoo County is going out of the business of housing/rehabilitating (?) minors. Surely paying the state to do it wouldn't cost us the current \$200 a day.

I can't imagine that six weeks or six months would change the environment of that 13-year-old left in charge of a methamphetamine lab.

While I don't believe in much hearsay, I do believe in demographic trends (the study of a population's characteristics). Are we going to explode the 18-to-30-year-old most-likely criminal group, so we need to double the size of the jail? That's the argument on need I'd like to hear.

I tend to agree with the gentlemen from the NAACP. We're letting people go daily, but do we have a crime wave from early releasees? Maybe alternative sentences, and the ever-present technological advances can be used. If an ankle bracelet was good enough for Martha Stewart, why isn't it good enough for our early releasees?

I'm open-minded, I think, but unconvinced by the discussion so far. And quit trying to scare me into voting for it. When I was a Kalamazoo County commissioner, the constant thought in the back of my mind was "What awful thing happens if we don't do it?" So far I'm unconvinced that closing the juvenile home, and allowing early releasees on the street would be a bad idea. I'm reminded of the movie, "Field of Dreams," where The Voice whispers to Kevin Costner, "If you build it, they will come." Are we creating a self-fulfilling prophesy?

James E. Walker is a Kalamazoo resident.



# Day-care provider gets six to 15 years for injuring baby

Tuesday, August 02, 2005

By John Agar The Grand Rapids Press

Karen Scholten sat in the back of court Monday with her 6-year-old son, Travis, who uses a wheelchair and faces a limited future after his baby-sitter violently shook him.

She wanted everyone to see the devastation of shaking a baby.

She also wanted to support Julie Taylor and her family, living their own nightmare: Taylor's daughter, Olivia, nearly died at 5 months after day-care provider Diane Robinson shook the girl until her body went limp.

"It breaks my heart," Scholten said. "I know the worst. I know the outcome for a shaken baby. I told Julie, if you give (Robinson) a year (in prison) for every tear, she'd be in there a million years."

Earlier, Taylor told a judge about the life-threatening injuries her daughter suffered, brain surgeries and other procedures just to keep her alive. She requires around-the-clock care.

"Please show Diane Robinson no mercy," she said. "She showed no mercy for my baby that day."

Ottawa County Circuit Judge Edward Post exceeded state sentencing guidelines, which called for 35 months in prison, by sentencing Robinson to six to 15 years.

"The defendant's actions have really burdened Olivia and her family with a lifetime of hardship," Post said. "I believe the guidelines fail to adequately address the crime."

Robinson, 48, had pleaded no contest to first-degree child abuse. In exchange, prosecutors agreed she would not face homicide charges if the girl died. Robinson, however, has insisted it was an accident, and tried unsuccessfully to withdraw her plea.

But Taylor, a Walker resident, said Robinson deliberately injured her daughter. Robinson called her at work in May 2004 and told her that Olivia was sick.

CONTINUED

# Day-care provider gets six to 15 years for injuring baby

Page 2 of 2

"She lied, and said nothing happened (to the girl)."

Taylor took her virtually comatose daughter to Spectrum Health Butterworth Campus where doctors suspected shaken-baby injuries.

She showed the judge pictures of a "beautiful, happy, healthy baby," then photos a couple days later after "Diane Robinson almost killed my baby."

Her daughter was in a life-threatening coma for eight days with brain swelling, and had retinal bleeding from being shaken.

She said her daughter has undergone four brain surgeries, and required frequent trips to the emergency room.

At one point, she said in tears, a neurosurgeon told her that her daughter needed life-saving brain surgery, but he understood if she didn't want the procedure done.

"Olivia will never be the same, I'll never be the same, my family will never be the same," she said.

Robinson declined to speak in court.

Sheriff's deputies led her family out of the courtroom after an earlier outburst at Robinson's plea hearing.

After the hearing, the victim's family said no sentence could bring justice, but they were satisfied the judge handed down a harsh sentence.

"I thought people should know by now you don't shake a baby," the girl's mother said. "I don't think it would ever be enough to make up for what happened to Olivia, but I'm satisfied. I'm glad it's over."

Karen Scholten, who has worked with area hospitals and organizations to end shaken-baby syndrome, said Taylor has had tough days, and will have many more.

Scholten's caregiver, Gail Winters, of Hudsonville, is serving a seven-year prison sentence for the 1999 injuries to her son.

"It's unbelievably horrible to watch your child not grow up."

# Daycare Child Abuser Gets At Least 6 Years

Created: 8/1/2005 5:08:00 PM

Updated: 8/1/2005 7:00:21 PM

Grand Haven - A day care provider is going to jail for at least 6 years for child abuse.

Diane Robinson was sentenced Monday in Ottawa County Circuit Court. She pleaded no contest earlier this year, and today the mother of the child told everyone about the severity of the abuse.

The judge went above and beyond the sentencing guidelines because he didn't think they addressed the extent of Olivia Taylor's injuries.

Julie Taylor was satisfied by the stiff penalty, but says no matter what the sentence her daughter's chance at a healthy life was taken away.

Taylor never thought she'd be in Grand Haven to address a court and criminal about the brutality of what happened to her daughter Olivia.

But before Diane Robinson, Olivia's daycare provider, was sentenced for shaking Olivia into a coma, Julie needed to speak.

"What Diane did was so ugly and cruel and cowardly to shake a little innocent baby, she gives day care providers a bad name," Taylor said in a packed court room.

According to the information provided at sentencing, about a year ago Diane Robinson called Julie to come and get Olivia from daycare.

When she arrived, the five month old was lifeless.

She had a severe brain injury which put her in a coma for eight days.

When she woke 220 therapy sessions awaited, along with brain surgery and months in the hospital.

"The next surgery they actually had to take her skull apart one section at a time ... I can't describe what it is like waiting for your daughter to have brain surgery for five to six hours," Taylor said.

Julie says she never found out exactly what happened that day in Jenison - and may never know since Robinson refused to comment in court.

But the effects are clear. Olivia cannot crawl or walk, feed herself or talk. She now has cerebral palsy and a life full of health problems and mental limitations. "Only a monster could hurt a baby, please show Diane no mercy, because she showed no mercy to my daughter on that day," Taylor said.

The judge sentenced Robinson to at least six years in prison, but she could serve as much as 15 years.

Julie Taylor is also considering a civil lawsuit to help with medical bills.

Web Editor: Keith Baldi, Grand Rapids Metro Team Reporter

# **'Grand Theft Auto' gives a little peek into children's access to porn**

Bay City Times  
Sunday, July 31, 2005

People talk about how much harder it is to be a child growing up these days.

Let me tell you, it ain't any easier being a parent.

The idea that you can shelter your child from influences that you don't think are appropriate has become almost laughable.

I was thinking about that last week after Gov. Jennifer Granholm and lawmakers called on stores to stop selling the video game "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas."

If you're not familiar with the "Grand Theft Auto" series, then you obviously are not a video gamer, because it's been a best-selling title for years.

It's just a fun little romp where you drag innocent people out of their car, beat them senseless, then drive off in their vehicle and crash it into everything in sight.

Well, maybe I'm over-simplifying a little.

But not much.

"Grand Theft Auto" has always been controversial, but even more with the recent revelation that owners of the "San Andreas" version can use a download from the Internet to unlock secret scenes that show naked women and couples in sexual positions.

"It is disgusting that these types of images are available," state Sen. Mark Schauer, a Democrat from Battle Creek, said last week. "It's pornography."

CONTINUED

# **'Grand Theft Auto' gives a little peek into children's access to porn**

Page 2 of 3

This sexual content is probably news to parents, including those who allowed their teen-age children to buy the game, which was rated "M" for mature.

It's a safe bet that these parents had no idea the game included hidden sex scenes.

But you can be sure their kids knew. And those kids knew exactly where to go on the Internet for the download to unlock the XXX content.

So no, it's not easy being a parent, if you have any notion that you're going to somehow restrict the access of your children to things you don't think they should be seeing.

When I was a teen-ager, my access to pornography was pretty limited. I had only two hopes of getting a peek at a Playboy magazine.

One was during our Boy Scout paper drives. Remember those? A big semi-trailer would be parked in the school parking lot, and people would bring in their newspapers and magazines. There'd be these huge wire bins, and we scouts would sort the different types of paper into the proper bins.

Once in a great while, we'd get lucky, and one of us would find a Playboy in a stack of magazines someone had just dropped off.

My best friend Steve was particularly adept at this. If there had been a merit badge for finding Playboys, he would have won it.

Of course, the fun never lasted long. The scout leaders usually found us out pretty quickly.

Generally speaking, if all the scouts suddenly fell quiet and were clustered in the back of the truck, that was a sure clue, and the Playboy was confiscated.

My only other hope of seeing Miss July in all her glory was when we visited our cousins, because my uncle subscribed to Playboy and kept the current issue in his underwear drawer.

# **'Grand Theft Auto' gives a little peek into children's access to porn**

Page 3 of 3

I can assure you that James Bond has been involved in less covert action than my brothers and I engaged in to get our hands on one of those magazines during a visit.

But that was then, and this is now.

These days, your kids can con you into buying a video game, and then you have to find out later, by reading the newspaper, that it has naked women cavorting in hidden rooms.

Now that this secret sexual content has become public knowledge, the rating of the game has been switched to "AO," or adults only, and stores like Target, Best Buy and Circuit City have stopped selling it.

But if you think your children are now safe from graphic sexual content, you are hopelessly naive.

That same Internet they used to get the "San Andreas" download gives them easy access to every form of sexually depraved material imaginable, not to mention a ready opportunity to chat online with child predators posing as friendly teens.

Sure, you can use Internet filters, and inconvenience your child to the extent that he has to go to a friend's house and access this filth.

I don't mean to sound defeatist about this.

I'm just saying that we've come a long ways from the days of a furtive glance at a Playboy during a Boy Scout paper drive, and the amount of vigilance required by parents to know what their children are exposed to has become daunting.

With or without Lansing's help, it's a big job these days to keep on top of what your child is watching.

Sometimes, it makes one long for a simpler time - for us, and for our children.

- Tony Dearing is editor of The Bay City Times. He can be reached by telephone at 894-9629 or by e-mail at [tdearing@bc-times.com](mailto:tdearing@bc-times.com).

Tuesday, August 2, 2005

## **State's anti-spam law won't protect children**

### **Penalties, jail time won't stop illicit and offshore marketers**

The Detroit News

Michigan's anti-spam registry to protect children from adult-oriented e-mail messages is a good idea in principle, but it won't solve what ails the Internet. Nor will it have much of an impact considering that the flood of unwanted e-mail that clogs our inboxes is sent surreptitiously and without regard to who is opening it.

The law, which took effect Monday and is the first of its kind in the nation, is designed to protect children from advertisements that display or have anything to do with pornography, tobacco, gambling, alcohol, illegal or prescription drugs, firearms or fireworks. Parents must register their children's e-mail addresses and birthdates with the state. There is no cost to sign up, and state officials say personal information is protected by unique coding to protect against hacking.

Unfortunately, we all know that no system is safe and the compilation of information about children -- even seemingly innocuous data -- puts the state in a precarious position. The state wants to open the registry to include instant message account addresses, mobile phone numbers, pager numbers and other contact information.

The do-not-call list for children's e-mail is unlikely to stop illicit messages from reaching children. People who peddle online pornography or gambling typically blast their messages from locations outside the country, and outside the reach of Michigan law enforcement efforts.

Legitimate marketers, however, will be forced to spend extra money checking addresses on their lists with the state. Violators can be fined up to \$5,000 for each message mailed and be sent to jail.

Unwanted e-mail certainly is troublesome, but the state's law won't stop offensive images or vice enticements from reaching children.



# **County agency will keep supplying food at GVRC**

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Tuesday, August 02, 2005

By Ron Fonger rfonger@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6317

## **GENESEE COUNTY**

The Genesee County Community Action Resource Department will continue to supply meals at the Genesee Valley Regional Center for at least another year.

The county Board of Commissioners has approved a contract renewal between the two county agencies, slightly raising the price of lunches and dinners, and leaving the cost of snacks and breakfasts unchanged.

The GVRC houses girls and boys 10 to 17 years old who are awaiting placement, trials or court hearings.

Last year, the county increased meal sizes by 25 percent after a doctor at the facility suggested children weren't getting enough to eat.

The new contract leaves the portions the same and charges \$4.18 for breakfast, \$4.57 for lunch (up 5 cents), \$4.95 for dinner (up 5 cents) and \$1.80 for a snack.

- Ron Fonger

# Home-delivered meals available for seniors

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION Tuesday, August 02, 2005

By Ron Fonger [rfonger@flintjournal.com](mailto:rfonger@flintjournal.com) • 810.766.6317

GENESEE COUNTY

Senior citizens in Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee counties can call the Valley Area Agency on Aging to see if they or someone they know qualify for home-delivered meals.

A hot meal and cold snack are delivered five days a week to those in the program who are 60 or older or the spouse of someone 60 or older and who are unable to cook and confined to their home, according to a news release.

The program is available on a temporary or ongoing basis.

Details: (810) 239-7671 in Genesee County; (810) 724-6030 in Lapeer County; and (989) 723-8875 in Shiawassee County.

- Ron Fonger

Detroit News

August 2, 2005

Brighton

## **Rotary gives \$5,000 to food bank**

The Brighton Rotary Club donated \$5,000 to Gleaners Community Food Bank of Livingston. The money will be used for warehouse storage shelving and other equipment. Gleaners distributes about one million pounds of food in Livingston County with its network of 28 member agencies. For information on Gleaners, call (517) 548-3710.

# ACCESS program director honored

Saturday, July 30, 2005

By Gary W. Morrison The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Growing up, Andrew Brower regarded the The Justice League of Americacomic book characters as real superheroes.

But he now he knows what a true superhero is because he knows Marsha DeHollander. Marsha has done things of superhero proportions," said Brower, president of the All County Churches Emergency Support System board. "In her 20 years with ACCESS, she has helped collect millions of pounds of food to feed the hungry."

A state lawmaker recently joined DeHollander's friends, family and co-workers in recognizing her service as program director of ACCESS. More than 70 people surprised DeHollander at a reception at the ACCESS office, 207 E. Fulton St.

Among the tributes was a plaque from Gov. Jennifer Granholm, presented by Rep. Kevin Green. It recognized DeHollander's creation of a food stamp outreach program, a network of more than 100 food pantries and expansion of the food drive countywide.

DeHollander, who has served as chairwoman for the Emergency Needs Task Force Food Subcommittee, said she is fortunate enough to be the link between those who can help and those who need help.

Food program coordinator Nancy Reenders, who has worked with DeHollander for 15 years, said DeHollander sees every challenge as an opportunity.

"Under her direction came the pantry network and poverty simulation workshop,"

Reenders said. "She embodied leadership in the best sense of the word."

DeHollander, who has also served on the Second Harvest Gleaners and Family Outreach boards, said the next challenge comes this week with ACCESS's move to The Urban Center, 355 Sheldon Ave. SE.

Detroit News

August 2, 2005

Rochester Hills

## **Childhelp USA opens Mich. Center**

Childhelp USA, a foster care agency that began in 1959 has just opened its first Michigan center in Rochester Hills. The nonprofit agency is seeking foster parents for children ages 12-17 with emotional issues. The foster homes would need to be therapeutic facilities, whereby a therapist will visit weekly, and the foster parents would need to be trained to handle daily behavior problems. Families interested must supply financial records and must have one stay-at-home parent. For information, visit [www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org).

***July 31, 2005***

## **ALBION**

# **Agency specialists chosen for service**

Family Independence Agency specialists Christi Weakley and Scott Schafer were chosen to service families when the new Albion Family Resource Center opens later this month.

"I am so excited about the staff coming," said Terrie Brownell, FIA program manager.

Weakley and Schafer submitted letters of interest for the transfer from the Battle Creek office. Weakley will attend the district's Back-To-School Celebration, to be held from noon to 3 p.m. Aug. 21 at Victory Park to introduce families to the opportunities through the center.

The center will be at Washington Gardner Elementary School, 401 E. Michigan Ave. FIA services will not be available for families who do not have children attending Washington Gardner, but school families who have problems and have not had services before can ask for help at the resource center office.

Specialists will give first priority to existing agency clients who have children in third through fifth grade. All of those cases will be transferred to the school and fully serviced there. The goal of the state-funded program is to reduce absenteeism in the school, decrease negative student behavior, increase parental support and improve student achievement.

**Originally published July 31, 2005**

Published August 2, 2005

## **Donated school supplies help make kids' lives easier Groups loading backpacks still short on items**

By Nicole Jacques  
Lansing State Journal

Unlike hundreds of local low-income students, Malik Wali has never faced going back to school without the right gear.

"It's tough because everybody else will have new stuff," the 13-year-old said, imagining being teased about it Monday as he loaded backpacks with pencils and folders. "If I get the chance to help somebody, I will."

He knew he was making one kid's life a little easier with each zip.

The City Rescue Mission hopes to send 2,000 kids back to school this fall with new classroom essentials.

But with only enough supplies for about 250 backpacks so far, the agency still needs many more donations from the community to reach the goal. The Salvation Army and several churches have joined forces this year with a plan to give away all supplies Aug. 20.

"We want to support parents," said Jodi Harkema, who's leading efforts by the Christian Services network of churches. "Some of them are on such tight budgets that even the great sales out there aren't enough, especially if there's more than one child in the family."

Volunteers have been busy turning piles of donated supplies into stocked backpacks. The backpacks - loaded with everything from notebooks to glue and markers - will be available for needy students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Jim Davis, director of student services for Lansing School District, said about 10 percent of the district's 16,000 students struggle with financial hardships.

"You don't find people who don't care what happens to their kids; you just find people who have lesser means," Davis said. "They're trying to make it from day to day. When a family knows they can get clothing, shoes, backpacks, school supplies, it takes one more burden away from them." The charitable groups aren't forgetting about the need for new school clothes. After a month of collecting classroom supplies, Christian Services will kick off a clothing drive this week. And the Salvation Army helped 100 kids receive both outfits and backpacks during a 17-day push at the Meridian Mall. The program, which included help from radio station 88.1 "Smile," ended Sunday.

### **Backpack bonanza**

- **What:** Low-income families receive free school supplies
- **When:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 20
- **Where:** Lansing City Rescue Mission, 613 E. Michigan Ave.
- **Restrictions:** One backpack will be available for each student in grades K-12 on a first-come, first-served basis. You must be a parent or legal guardian of a low-income student. Bring a Social Security card, birth certificate or Medicaid card for each child.

"Some of these children have hand-me-downs and never get any new clothes," coordinator Laurie Kellogg said. "To go to school the first day with a brand-new outfit makes a big difference to them."

Contact Nicole Jacques at 377-1066 or [njacques@lsj.com](mailto:njacques@lsj.com).

### **How to help**

Three agencies are working together to collect enough school supplies to fill 2,000 backpacks for local children who need them before school starts. Individuals and organizations are asked to donate the following items:

- Backpacks
- Loose paper and notebooks (college and wide-ruled)
- Pens (red, blue and black)
- Three-ring binders
- Glue bottles and sticks
- Crayons
- Pencil sharpeners
- Scissors
- Rulers
- Erasers
- Folders
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Pencil boxes
- Donations should be taken to the Lansing City Rescue Mission, 607 E. Michigan Ave. For more information, call 485-0145.



Lansing State Journal

Published August 2, 2005

Local news briefs

## **Services set for boys killed in fire**

Investigators still are trying to determine what sparked the blaze that killed two young brothers Thursday.

A fund has been established through Comerica Bank in memory of Corey Blocker Jr., 8, and Tyreek Washington, 4, who died in a fire at their 304 W. Thomas St. home. The boys' mother saved her 6-year-old daughter, but searing heat and smoke kept her from getting back to the boys, who were together in a bedroom.

Services for both boys will be held at 1 p.m. Friday at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, 5200 Pleasant Grove Road. Anyone wishing to help the family with funeral expenses may mail donations to the Washington Family Fund, 302 W. Thomas St., Lansing, MI 48906.

## **Police still get tips on missing boy**

A month after he went missing, Ingham County sheriff's detectives still are receiving tips but have no solid information on the whereabouts of 7-year-old Ricky Holland.

The boy was last seen July 1, when his parents, Tim and Lisa Holland, put him to bed at their Williamston home. Ricky is about 3-foot-5 and weighs about 55 pounds. He has blond hair and blue eyes and was last seen wearing a gray shirt and red pajama-style pants. Anyone with information is urged to call (517) 676-8211.

## **Law helps collect back child support**

Beginning in October, people who owe past due child support will have a 90-day window to avoid state criminal and civil enforcement penalties under a new law. Payers can submit a "Child Support Amnesty Request Form" to the local Friend of the Court office after Oct. 1. The request must be accompanied by at least half of the past due support owed. The rest must be paid by Dec. 31. To obtain an amnesty request form or get more information, contact the local Friend of the Court office, go to [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs) and click on "Child Support," or call (866) 540-0008.

### **Mistake will be regretted**

In response to Laura Berman's June 30 column, "Bat abortion tells a story of shame and sexual guilt," on the boy who battered his girlfriend to cause an abortion: I say, what is really sad is that those two children did not choose to talk to their parents when they found out she was pregnant. Also, isn't it sad they will have to live their lives with the fact they aborted their first child. They will never get over it.

D.N 8/1/05 MARY TOMILO  
Dearborn

P 8A

D.N.  
Pg 4A

8/1/05

### **Sexuality at youth prisons higher**

**WASHINGTON** — Sexual assaults and other illicit incidents of sexual contact are reported at juvenile prisons at 10 times the rate of adult lockups, a government study finds. The study was done by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics. The numbers are based on substantiated reports to corrections officials in 2004. Co-author Allen J. Beck said the study did not make a distinction between consensual and nonconsensual sexual contact. For people under 18, any sexual contact is illegal, he said.